



Rurouni Kenshin™

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

22

THERE HAVE BEEN A SLEW OF UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS LATELY.

WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO FIND A MORE PERMANENT WORKPLACE...?

OOOPH

YOU SAYING THAT MAKES THINGS EVEN MORE UNFORTUNATE -SO DON'T!



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



FINISHED MOVING

TO BE MORE ACCURATE, THINGS DIDN'T GO AS PLANNED DUE TO A LACK OF TIME, BUT WE'LL SETTLE WITH WHAT WE'VE GOT.

THE NEW WORKPLACE IS ON THE NINTH FLOOR. THE VIEW IS CLEAR AND THE NOISE FROM THE CITY DOESN'T REACH US, ALL OF WHICH IS BENEFICIAL. BUT EVEN A LITTLE BIT OF PSYCHOSIS CAN BRING ABOUT SOME SPONTANEOUS, NO-ROPE BUNGEE JUMPING, SO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

THOUGH IT IS STILL A TEMPORARY (RENTED) HOME, I MUST WORK TOWARDS BUILDING A BETTER LIVING EXPERIENCE THAN BEFORE.

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 22: BATTLE ON THREE FRONTS
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

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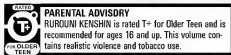
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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

STORY & ART BY NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY
Vol. 22: BATTLE ON THREE FRONTS

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *surouni*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.



Imai Banjin



Otowa Hyōko

THUS FAR

Kenshin and his friends return to Tokyo after a deadly battle to defeat Shishio Makoto and his ambitions of conquering Japan. However, their peace is short lived as those with grudges against Battōsai gather for revenge, attacking Akabeko, Mackawa Dojo, and police chief Uramura's house. To make matters worse, Kenshin finds out that the mastermind of this new attack is Enishi, the brother of Kenshin's deceased wife Tomoe—who died at Kenshin's own hands. Enishi confronts Kenshin and declares that he will lead an assault on the Kamiya dojo in ten days. Kenshin decides that although he can never fully atone for the crimes of his past, he will fight to protect the present, and begins by telling his friends of Tomoe, who came to love Kenshin, the man who killed her fiancé... And of Kenshin, who lost his hearing and vision during a battle against the Yamanote, and accidentally took Tomoe's life. Ten days later, Enishi and his comrades appear midair above the Kamiya dojo in hot air balloons. Kujiiramanji attacks first with the Armstrong Cannon attached to his right arm. With a well-timed combination of offense and defense, Kenshin and Sanosuke are able to render Kujiiramanji temporarily immobile. The second attack comes from Imai and Otowa. Sanosuke confronts Imai, and Otowa, who initially targets Kaoru and the others, freezes up when faced by Kenshin. In order to break the impasse on the ground, Gein moves in!

明神
神彦



Myōjin Yahiko

相楽
左之助



Sagara Sanosuke

高荷
恵



Takani Megumi

外
印



Gein

緋村
剣心
(入斬り
抜刀流)



Himura Kenshin
(Hitokiri Battōsai)

神谷
薫



Kamiya Kaoru

雪代
縁



Yukishiro Enishi



C

A

S

T



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ISN'T IT
DIFFICULT
TO FIGHT
WHILE
DEFENDING
SOMETHING?

HEH
HEH
HEH...

HA-
HAA!!!

THOMP

Act 187
The Tides
of Battle

KENSHIN
...

SANO-
SUKE.

...GEIN-
SAN.

I AM
LEAVING
IT TO
YOU, FOR
NOW...

THIS BATTLE
WILL BE
DECIDED BY
BATTOSAI...

...AND
HOW HE
DETERMINES
HIS MOVE
HERE.

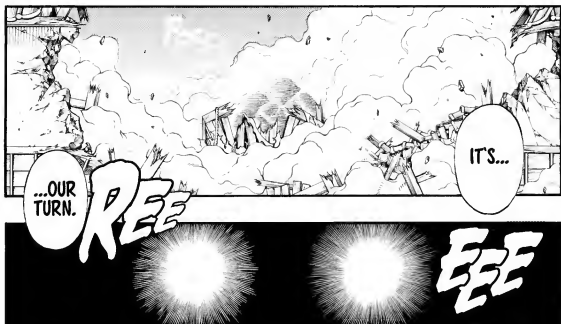
SHAK

FW
IS
HH



"MO-
TION..."

...AND
"SILENCE,"
CREATING A
STANDSTILL.



仲
月
宏

参
號
夷
腕
坊

IWANBO
VERSION
THREE

猛
襲
型
!!!

SAVAGE
MODE!!!

Act 187
The Tides of Battle



I
THINK HIS
NAME IS
"IWANBO"!

THAT'S
THE GUY
FROM THAT
TIME AT
AOI-YA...!

HE SEEMS
MUCH MORE
FEROCIOUS
THAN
BEFORE!

THIS IS THE WORST-CASE
SCENARIO...IT'S ALREADY AN IMPASSE
WITH TWO AGAINST TWO, BUT NOW
ANOTHER HAS JOINED THE BATTLE.
AND IF TIME KEEPS PASSING, THE
CANNON GUY WILL RECOVER...!



IT LOOKS
LIKE GEIN
HAS
SOMETHING
CRAZY!

HA-
HAHA



FWIP
TIME
FOR SOME
SERIOUS
STOMPING—

I CAN'T
WASTE
ANY MORE
TIME!



IS IT?

...IS...

...THAT
WHAT GEIN
WAS MAKING
IN THE
BASEMENT
...?



KENSHIN ...

GRRT

NOW.

NOW!

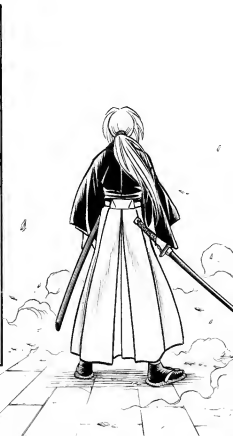
NOW!!

...YOU HAVE TO MOVE.

BUT HOW WILL YOU MOVE?

...YOU
HAVE TO
MOVE.

BUT HOW WILL YOU MOVE?



◀ READ THIS WAY ▶



DO YOU REALLY HAVE THE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT SO CAREFULLY?!

WHAT'S WRONG, BATTOSAI!

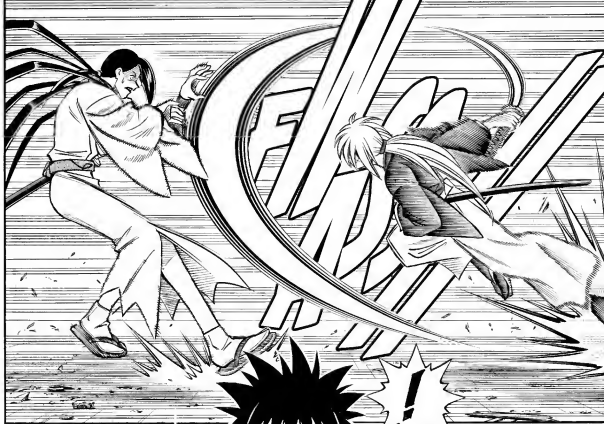


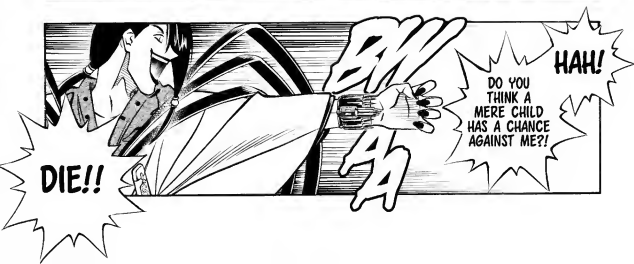
AAHHH !!

SH!!

DA

UGH!





WHAT
?!

!!

SLASH

HAH
!!

GAH
!!



KENSHIN ...

...IS
LEAVING
THIS
BATTLE TO
YAHIKO...

WHAT
?



DID YOU
THINK YOU
HAD A
CHANCE
AGAINST
KENSHIN?!

YOU
DIDN'T EVEN
REALIZE THAT
KENSHIN'S
SWING WAS
AIMED AT THE
WEAPON ON
YOUR ARM.



LOOK
WHO'S
TALKING.

...YOU WERE
ALREADY
SO FAR
AHEAD...

WHEN I
THOUGHT I
COULD
FIGHT
ALONGSIDE
YOU...

DASH

GLINT

...I WILL
DEFEND THIS
POINT WITH
ALL MY
MIGHT!

GRIP

BUT
FOR NOW...

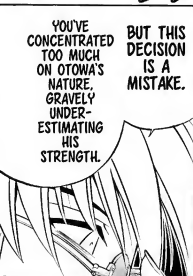
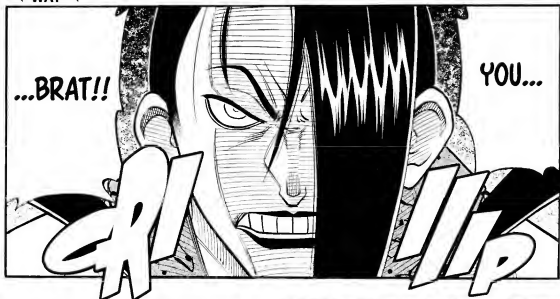
I AM
YOUR
OPPONENT
NOW!!

STAND
UP!!

RAAA

...HE
GAVE TO
ME!!!

THE
FIRST
BATTLE...



...YOU WILL
NOT GO
UNWOUNDED
!!

THAT KID
WILL DIE!
AND...



LET'S
BEGIN...

I'M TIRED
OF WAITING
FOR YOU,
BATTOSAI!





THERE
IS NO
TIME...

IWANBŌ
CALLED VERSION
"SAVAGE
MODE."

Whoa

THIS IS
THE FIRST
TIME I TAKE
IT INTO BATTLE,
SO ALLOW ME
TO TEST IT
OUT FULLY.

...UNFORTU-
NATELY...
...SOMEONE
IS WAITING
FOR THIS ONE
IN THE SKY.

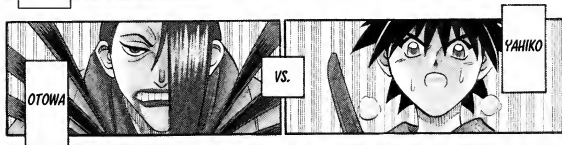
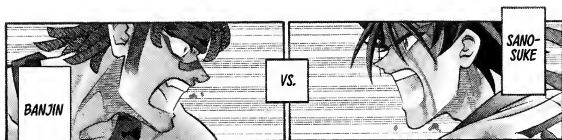


Rurouni Kenshin



Act 188—Artist of *Karakuri*

THE BATTLE IS
SPLIT IN THREE—



Act 188
Artist of
Karakuri



KENSHIN

VS.

GEIN

...NOBODY
HAS BEEN
ABLE TO
SAY IT
TWICE.

I
HEAR
THAT
A LOT.

HOW-
EVER...

W H O O

PLAYING
WITH
DOLLS...

HERE
I COME,
BATTŌSAI!

THE
FIRST
TIME
IS...

...THE
LAST
TIME!

CHOMP

SPRA

REE

WHRRRR!!





HMM.



RYÜKANSEN (DRAGON-
SPIRAL STRIKE)!!

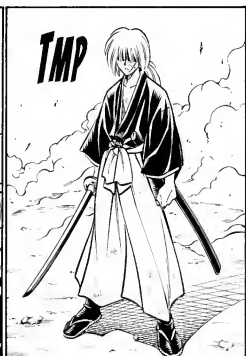
龍卷閃!!
りゅう
かん
せん

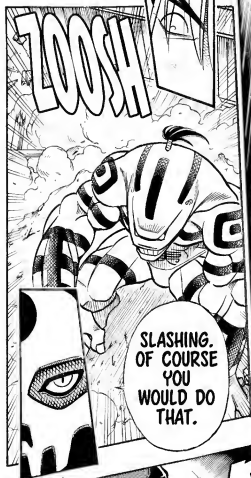
飛天御剣流
ひ
てん
ご
けん
りゅう

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYU





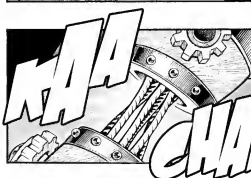




SLASHING.
OF COURSE
YOU
WOULD DO
THAT.



HOWEVER...



...DESTROYED
FIRST!!

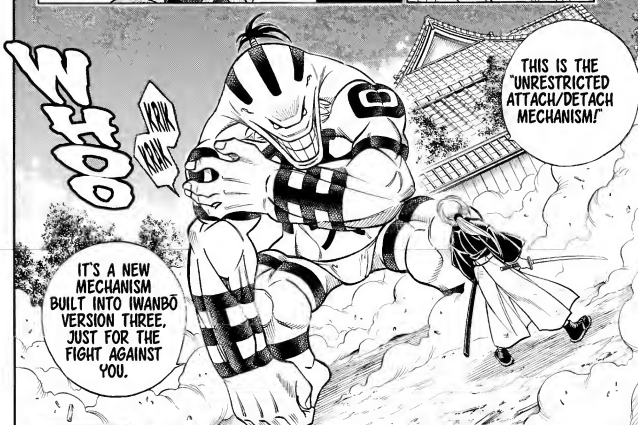




...LEAVING
ONLY THE
HIGHLY ELASTIC
RUBBER SKIN
AND THE STEEL
CONTROL
LINES...



IF I
DISCONNECT
THE
FRAMEWORK
OF THE
MECHANISM...



ME?

I HAVE
NOT
INTRODUCED
MYSELF
YET.





I AM
THE LAST
REMAINING
DESCENDANT
OF A FAMILY
WHO
MASTERED
THE ART OF
ROBOTICS
IN THE
MIDDLE AGES.

THE
"ARTIST
OF
KARAKURI,"
GEIN!



...OF
KARAKURI
...



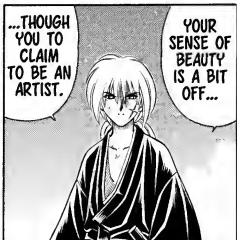
ARTIST...



QUITE
CRITICAL...

SO
TRUE.

KEN-
SAN...



...THOUGH
YOU TO
CLAIM
TO BE AN
ARTIST.

YOUR
SENSE OF
BEAUTY
IS A BIT
OFF...

THIS
"IWANBŌ" IS
NOT A PRODUCT
OF THE PURSUIT
OF PHYSICAL
BEAUTY.

BUT
THE WORD
BEAUTY
CAN MEAN
MANY
THINGS.

HEH HEH...
I HEAR
THAT A
LOT.



HE IS A
PRODUCT OF THE
PURSUIT OF
FUNCTIONAL
BEAUTY!

I WILL SHOW
YOU MY CREATION
OF THE EPITOME
OF PHYSICAL BEAUTY
LATER, BUT THIS
IWANBÔ HAS A
DIFFERENT KIND
OF BEAUTY—



YOU SHOULD
USE YOUR
TECHNOLOGY TO
DO SOME GOOD
FOR THE PEOPLE...

...FUNCTIONAL
BEAUTY. AS YOU
SAY, IT IS A VERY
SOPHISTICATED
KIND OF
TECHNOLOGY.



WOULD A
SUPERIOR CASTLE
ARCHITECT
BUILD
TENEMENTS?

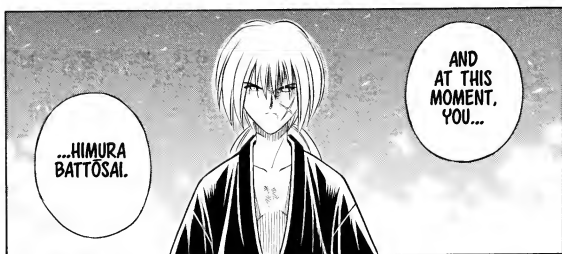
BUT
WOULD A
MASTER SWORD-
SMITH MAKE
RAZORS?

I HEAR
THAT A
LOT,
ALSO.



IN ORDER TO
EXPLORE IT, I
CONSTANTLY STRIVE
TO BE NEAR MEN
WHO REEK OF
THE SCENT OF
BATTLE.

THE
FOREFRONT
OF
TECHNOLOGY
IS ALWAYS
IN BATTLE.



...THERE IS
NO TIME
TO BE
PLAYING
WITH
DOLLS!!

THEN
EVEN
MORE
THAN
BEFORE
...



HE PLANS TO
USE HIS SPEED
TO STRIKE
BEFORE I
DETACH THE
FRAMEWORK!

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!

BUT
I HAVE
TRAINED
HARD TO
MANIPULATE
THIS
MECHANISM
!!





BYOO

KAWAII!

NO!
HE'S AN
INSTANT
TOO
LATE!!

R
R
M
M

RYUSHŌSEN
(DRAGON
FLIGHT)!!

龍翔閃!!

りゅう
しょう
せん

WHAT
?!

R
M
M
M

R
M
M
M
M

AAAAH!!

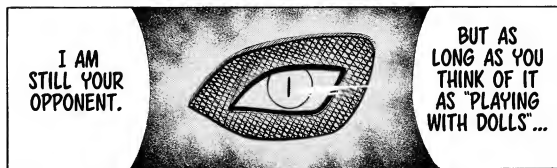


...IT
WILL BE
TORN
APART!

IF HE WRAPS IT
AROUND HIS SWORD
AND STRETCHES
IT FURTHER, NO
MATTER HOW
ELASTIC THE
MATERIAL MAY BE...

I GET IT!!
ONCE IT IS
STRETCHED
TO THE
LIMIT...





Rurouni Kenshin



伸
月
宏

ろくにん
外
印

RUROUNI
KENSHIN

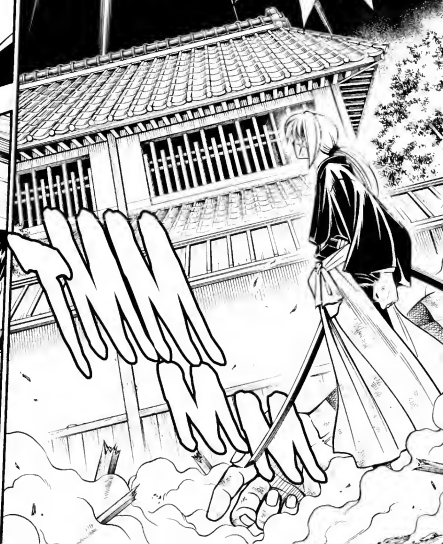
GEIN

Act 189

Battle on Three Fronts: Round 1, Part 1



...







YOU, WHO
COMMITTED
THE
CRIME OF
MURDER...

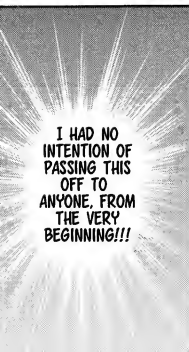
...AND I,
WHO WILL
CAST DOWN
THE JUDGMENT
OF JINCHŪ...!

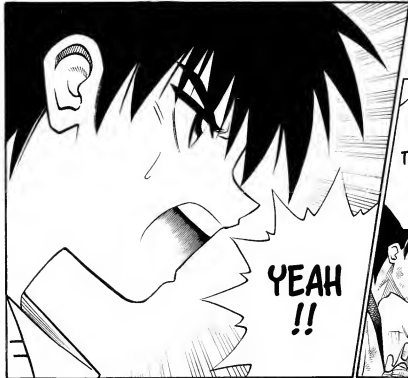


I WILL
COME DOWN
WHEN THERE
IS NO ONE
ELSE TO
FIGHT.



I AM THE
ONE IN
CONTROL
OF THIS
SITUATION ...
FACE THE
OPPONENT IN
FRONT OF YOU
BEFORE YOU
SPIT AT THE
HEAVENS.





YEAH
!!

I'M
LEAVING
THAT DRAG
QUEEN
TO YOU!!

YOU HEARD
THAT,
YAHIKO!
ONE WIN
PER
PERSON!!

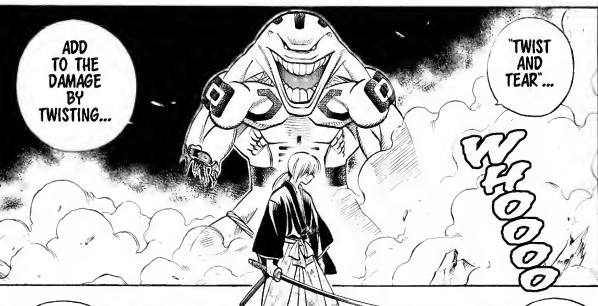
FWUMP

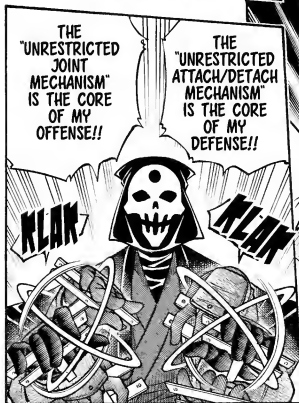


HAH!!

THW

BRAT....!!





SENWANGEDI (PIERCING
ARM ATTACK)!!

撃

げき

穿

せん

!!

腕

わん

GAHH!!





HE MUST
HAVE
INJURED
AN
INTERNAL
ORGAN...!!

THAT
MUCH
BLOOD
...

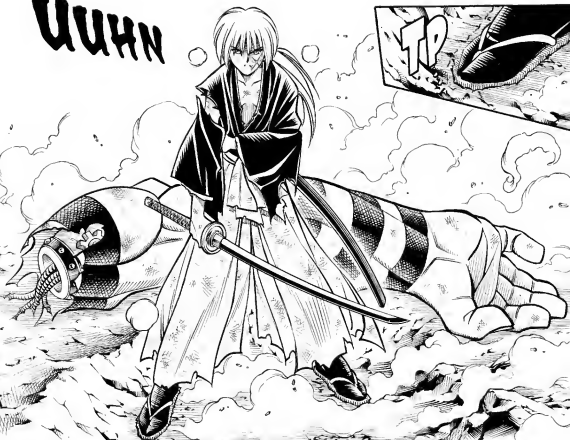
KENSHIN!



ONE
HIT...

...LEADS
TO
SEVERE
DAMAGE...

UUNN



I DO
NOT EXERT
MUCH
ENERGY.



ALL I
HAVE TO
MOVE ARE
MY
FINGERS.

LITERALLY,
HAVING AN
ARM CUT
OFF DOES
NOT HURT.



EXTREMELY
ACCURATELY...

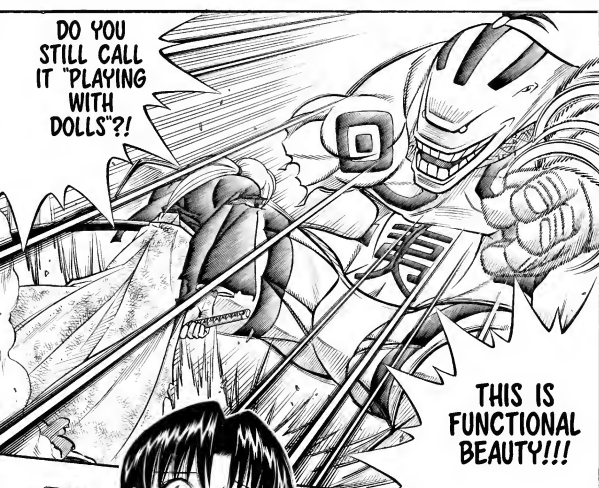
I GET
THE MOST
EFFECT FROM
THE LEAST
AMOUNT OF
EFFORT...

...AND
SAFELY...

WH
RR

WH
RR

TP

DO YOU
STILL CALL
IT "PLAYING
WITH
DOLLS"?!


THIS IS
FUNCTIONAL
BEAUTY!!!


KENSHIN!!





NO! NOT ONLY
DO THE ARMS
TWIST, BUT THE
WHOLE BODY
DOES TOO?!

!!

HOW
EASY.



HEH.

KLAK



...HIS
BACK—



HE'S
GOT...

KEN
....!!



SORRY,
ENISHI.





HE USED MY
"IMPACT
ABSORPTION
MECHANISM"
AS
A SHIELD....!!!

IWANBŌ'S
RIGHT
ARM...

EVERYTHING
YOU DO...

YOUR
"PLAYING
WITH
DOLLS"...

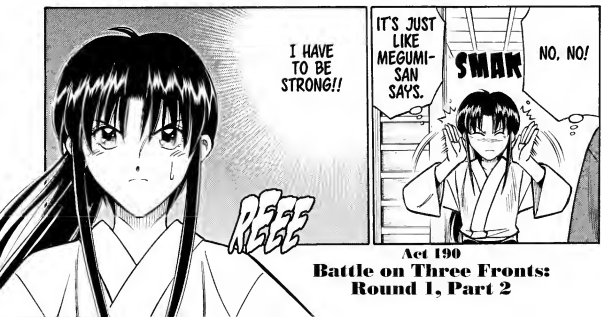
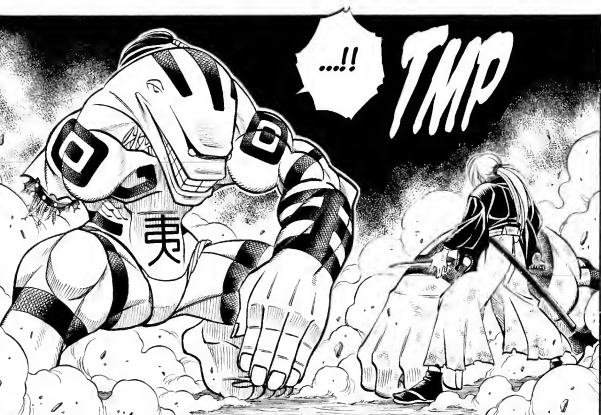
...IF YOU
DO NOT
KNOW THE
TASTE OF
BLOOD OR
PAIN...

...NO
MATTER
HOW SUPERIOR
THE DOLL YOU
CREATE
AND USE...

...ENDS
UP
BEING
"PLAY."

Rurouni Kenshin





Act 190
**Battle on Three Fronts:
Round 1, Part 2**



EVEN THOUGH
HE IS SEVERELY
INJURED FROM
THE FIRST
SENWANGKI
ATTACK, HE DID
NOT FALL BEHIND
FOR AN INSTANT...

...AND ACTED
IN THE
FASTEST
AND MOST
EFFICIENT
MANNER!

AND HIS
REACTIONS
ARE SO
FAST...!

...THIS
MAN
IS SO
QUICK-
WITTED.

BUT I COULD
NOT ASK FOR
A BETTER
OPPONENT
TO TEST
IWANBŌ!!



HE IS
NOT TO BE
TAKEN
LIGHTLY
!!

BATTŌSAI
!!



HERE
I
COME!

WHRR WHRR WHRR WHRR





AND
EVEN
IF HE
WINS...

...IT IS
STILL
PART OF
THE REAL
ENEMY'S
PLANS.

NO, IT
SEEMS
LIKE
THAT
AT
FIRST
GLANCE
...
...BUT
HE
SEES
ALL OF
HIS OP-
PONENT'S
MOVES.



REALLY
?

KEN-
SAN'S
BEING
PUSHED...



HOWEVER
?

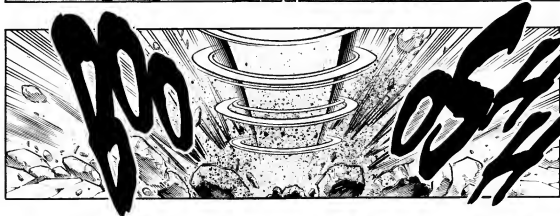


HOWEVER
...

IT WILL BE
DISADVANTAGEOUS
FOR KENSHIN IF THIS
DRAGS ON AND HE
KEEPS USING MORE
OF HIS ENERGY.

THE FACT THAT HIS
SWORD STRIKES DO NOT
AFFECT HIS OPPONENT
REMAINS UNCHANGED,
AND WITH THAT MUCH
MOVEMENT, HE CAN'T
TWIST AND TEAR
A JOINT.

BA DOOSH



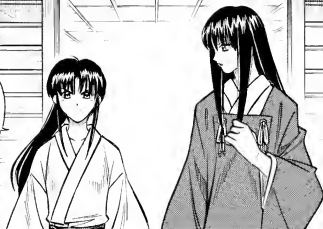
SHAAA

A
LITTLE.



YES...

THRUST
!!



CONSIDERING
THE WEIGHT
DIFFERENCE
AND THE
FORCE OF THE
TWISTING,
KENSIN WILL
PROBABLY BE
DEFLECTED.

BUT IT
WILL BE
TOUGH TO
AIM FOR
ARMS
AND LEGS
THAT ARE
TWISTING.

THAT WAS
PROVEN BY
KENSIN'S
EARLIER
BLOCK.

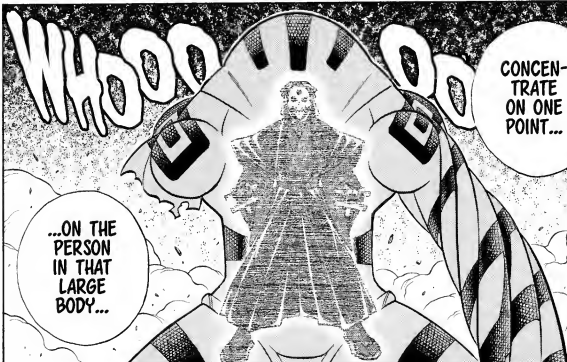
THOUGH
HE
CANNOT
SLASH
IWANBŌ,
HE CAN
PIERCE IT.





...ONE
TARGET.

THERE
IS...



...ON THE
PERSON
IN THAT
LARGE
BODY...

CONCENTRATE
ON ONE
POINT...



...THERE
CAN BE
NO
MISTAKES
...

HOWEVER...
THRUSTS ARE
NORMALLY
POWERFUL
FATAL
MOVES.
IN
ORDER
FOR
KENSIN
TO NOT
KILL...



NO
MATTER
HOW
DIFFICULT...

...THERE
IS ONLY ONE
SPOT HE
CAN AIM
FOR...



IF
HE CAN
STRIKE
THERE, IT
IS THE
SAME AS
CRUSHING
IWANBO'S
LEFT
ARM!!

GEIN'S
LEFT ARM,
THE MAIN
SOURCE OF
CONTROL!!

JUST
AS I
EXPECTED.

THAT
IS THE
LAST
RESORT.

THRUSTS
...

THE ARMOR
MADE OF
INTERLOCKING
WOVEN STEEL,
BOTH DURABLE
AND FLEXIBLE,
WILL NOT LET
ANY THRUSTS
THROUGH!

THE
FOURTH
MECHANISM,
THE
"ANTI-
PIERCING
ARMOR!"

THERE
IS NO
ABSOLUTE
WITH HIM.

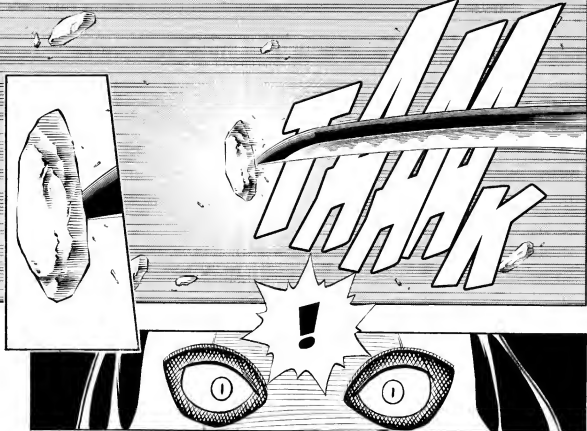
IN SOME
SENSE, I AM
TAKING A
GAMBLE...

...HOWEVER,
THAT MAN
HAS ALREADY
PULLED A FEW
UNEXPECTED
TRICKS...

AAAHH
!!

HE'S
GOING
FOR
IT!!

LET'S
DO
IT!!







!!

BACH

IT
DIDN'T
WORK!!

HEH HEH
HEH. IT
WAS TRULY A
SUPERB THRUST,
BUT THE DEBRIS
IN THE AIR
HALVED ITS
IMPACT!!



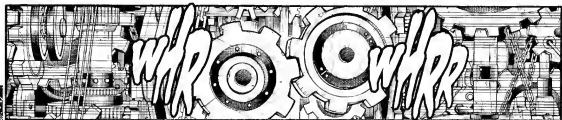
LUCK HAS
ABANDONED
YOU IN
THE END, AND
NOW YOU
WILL LOSE!!

IWANBŌ'S
HIDDEN
MOVE!!!

RRRM

VICTORY
FOR MY
FUNCTIONAL
BEAUTY!!

RRRM



せん
腕
撃
せん

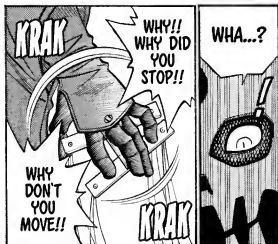
せん
指
し

SENSHI SENWANGKI
(PIERCING
FINGERS ATTACK)!

KEN...!



...SHI...

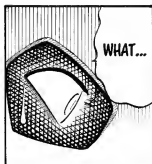


WHA...?

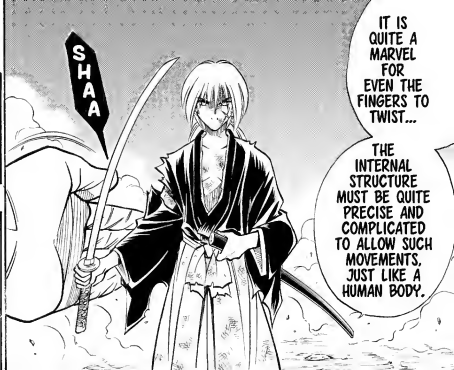




GASP!



WHAT...



IT IS
QUITE A
MARVEL
FOR
EVEN THE
FINGERS TO
TWIST...

THE
INTERNAL
STRUCTURE
MUST BE QUITE
PRECISE AND
COMPLICATED
TO ALLOW SUCH
MOVEMENTS.
JUST LIKE A
HUMAN BODY.



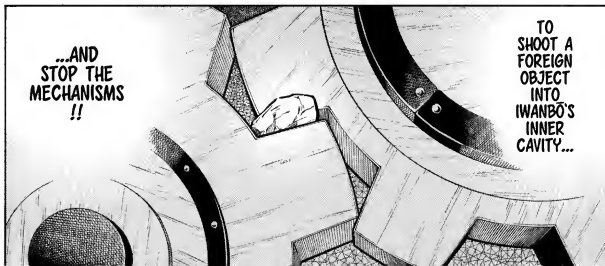
...OR
THE BLOOD
CIRCULATES
THROUGH EVERY
INCH OF
THE BODY...

JUST AS
THE ARM MOVES
WITH THE
SHOULDERS...



...FROM
THE
BEGINNING...!

THIS
WAS THE
INTENTION
OF THE
THRUST...



...AND
STOP THE
MECHANISMS
!!

TO
SHOOT A
FOREIGN
OBJECT
INTO
IWANBO'S
INNER
CAVITY...



YOUR
DEFEAT
COMES FROM
TRYING TO
WIN WITHOUT
EXPERIENCING
THE TASTE
OF BLOOD
AND PAIN.



BLEEDING
AND PAIN
ARE
IMPORTANT
TO SIGNAL
CHANGES
AND DANGER
TO THE
BODY...

SHAK

YOU WILL THEN REALIZE
THE IMPORTANCE OF
YOUR LIFE, AND
THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

HAAAAA

FOR ONCE, YOU
SHALL EXPERIENCE
THE TASTE OF
BLOOD AND PAIN.

...AS
PROMISED
EARLIER.

NOW,
LET US
DESTROY
THAT TOY...

HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ SECRET!

AMAKAKERU RYU NO HIRAMEKI
(DRAGON FLIGHT OF HEAVEN!!)

龍

りゅうの

天

あま

閃

ひらめき

翔

かける



The Secret Life of Characters (43) —Iwanbō (Versions One-Three)—

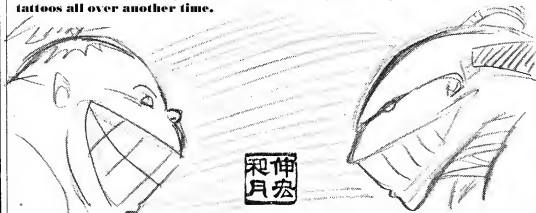
Following the “Giant” Fuji of the *Juppongatana*, Iwanbō was made from the image of a “full body costume.” I have crammed in quite a lot of material from the Kyoto episodes to the *Jinchū* episodes, so I think it may have been a little overdone (though I still have more I can add), but I personally enjoyed this character.

In Version One, I had to hide the fact he was a costume suit, so I portrayed him as a very mysterious character, but the design kept changing, turning him into a weird, but likeable personality. This is the character Iwanbō. Version Two was not intended to appear, but since Gein broke Version One, I had to cut and paste (this will play a part in the story later). Version Three was made to fight against Kenshin, so it was turned into a powerful suit.

After all of this, I seem to have gotten carried away, making him feel out of place in the world of *Ruro-Ken*, so there are things to reflect on.

The model in terms of design for Version One (and Two) were Blob and Mojo from *X-Men*. But I was also hooked on *Vampire Hunter* by CAPCOM during this time, resulting in the incorporation of Victor and Sasquatch, turning him into something enter.

Now for the problem (?)—Version Three. The rumor on the streets is that the model is the mass production version of *Eva*, but the model is actually Hulk from the American comics. However, it is not the Hulk that we all know, but it is the Hulk that was on a small booklet, “Marvel X,” that came with the American comics magazine *Wizard*. (It is like a character listing from “Age of Apocalypse” by Marvel Universe. Watsuki does not know the details either.) When I mixed him with Version One’s huge mouth, small eyes, and the tuft of hair, it turned into what we have today. The tattoo all over the body was to give him the look of a battling tribe from an undeveloped world, but it doesn’t look that good. I would like to try drawing a character with tattoos all over another time.

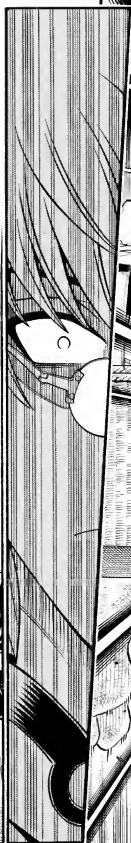




GYAAAAH!



Act 191
Battle on Three Fronts:
Round 2, Part 1



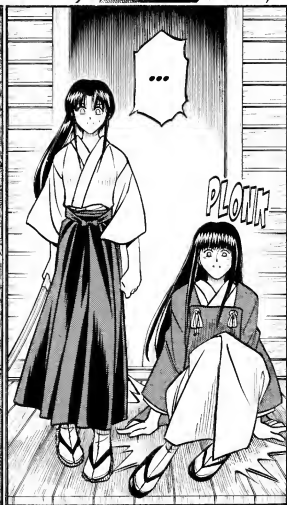
Act 191

**Battle
on Three
Fronts:
Round 2,
Part 1**

仲伸
月宏



WHOOOO







THAT MUST
HAVE BEEN
THE MOST
POWERFUL
OF YOUR
MOVES.

BUT IT
WAS A
MISTAKE
TO NOT
FINISH ME
WITH THAT
STRIKE...

TWITCH



THAT
WOULD HAVE
BEEN THE END
OF ME WITHOUT
THE 'IMPACT
ABSORPTION' AND
'ANTI-PIERCING
ARMOR'
MECHANISMS...

...QUITE
POWER-
FUL...

**HFF
HFF**



TMP

GUH...

**H
URK**



...DOES THAT MEAN
YOU'LL COME OUT
OF THAT TOY AND
FIGHT ON YOUR OWN?



!!

DOO

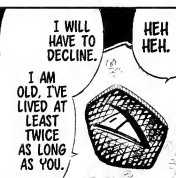
美

DOO

MM



WITHOUT
THAT SPIRIT,
NO MATTER
HOW
SUPERIOR
THE TECH-
NOLOGY...



...IT
WILL BE
DEFEATED
AND
DESTROYED.

WHOOOO



GEIN...AS
YOU SAY, THE
FOREFRONT OF
TECHNOLOGY
LIES IN
BATTLE.

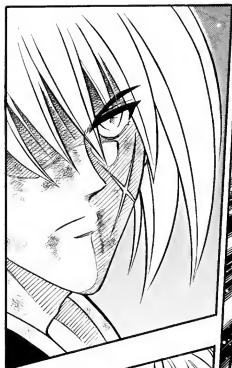
BUT
THERE ARE
THOSE WHO USE
TECHNOLOGY
TO MAKE
PEOPLE'S LIVES
BETTER...

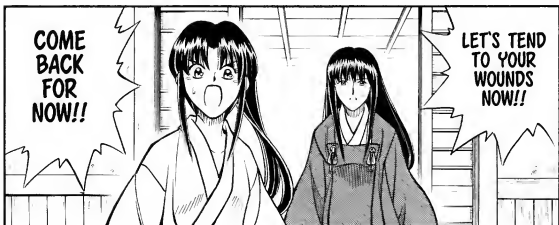
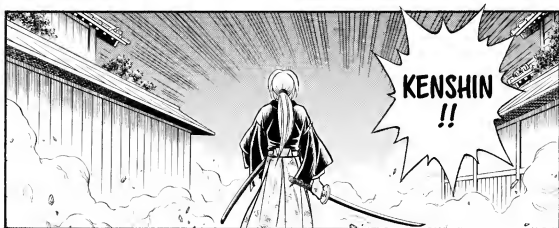
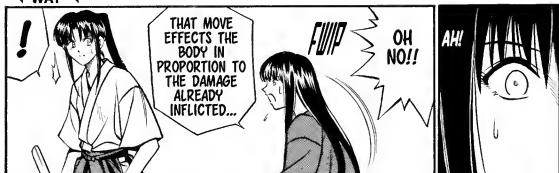


IN THIS
SITUATION...

...MY
FUNCTIONAL
BEAUTY WAS
INADEQUATE.

I
LOSE.





COME
BACK
FOR
NOW!

HE WON'T
COME DOWN
RIGHT AWAY,
EVEN IF
YOU WAIT
THERE.

TMP

THIS IS
A BATTLE
THAT PUTS
YOUR WHOLE
LIFE AT
RISK!

YOU'LL
REGRET IT IF
YOU DON'T
HAVE YOURSELF
IN THE BEST
CONDITION AT
ALL TIMES!



KENSHIN!!

IT'S
NOT AS
POWERFUL
AS I
THOUGHT...



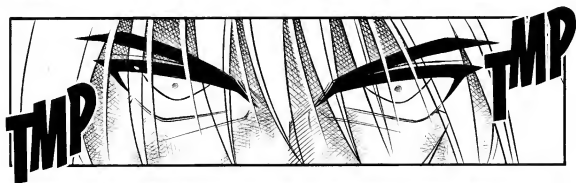
"AMA-
KAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI"
...

THE
SECRET
OF
HITEN...





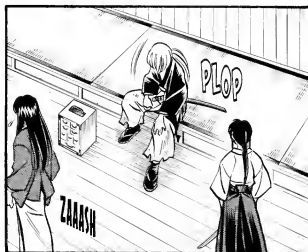
MY. OH MY.



TROMP







NO MATTER HOW
OUTRAGEOUS THE
INCIDENTS BECOME,
AS LONG AS THE
MASTERMIND IS
YUKISHIRO ENISHI,
THIS DEFENSIVE
BATTLE IS HARDER ON
HIS SPIRIT THAN ANY
BATTLE BEFORE...



HE SEEMS IN SO
MUCH PAIN...IT'S
ONLY NATURAL.
THESE INCIDENTS,
STARTING WITH
THE DESTRUCTION
OF AKABEKO...



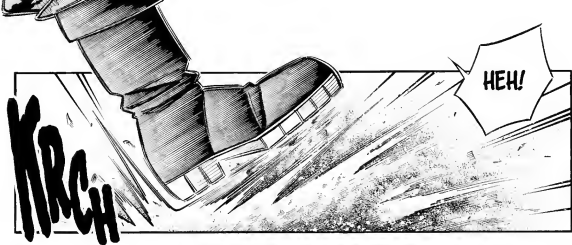
IT IS
ALL
RIGHT.

AND IN THE END, THIS
ONE WILL FIND THE
"ANSWER" TO
ATONING FOR TAKING
THE LIVES OF TOMOE
AND MANY OTHERS!



NO MATTER
HOW HARD,
THIS ONE WILL
KEEP FIGHTING
TO PROTECT
THE PEOPLE
OF THE
PRESENT.





...YOU
STILL THINK
YOU'RE GOING
TO FIGHT
KENSHIN?



WHAT...



LOOK
WHO'S
TALKING,
WITH
HIS FACE
DRENCHED
IN
BLOOD!!





HE'S WAY
BEYOND
YOU, AND...

GIVE UP
ON FIGHTING
KENSIN.

...ME
!!

...YOU
HAVE...

HE'S WAY
BEYOND
YOU, AND...

SPLOOSH

GIVE UP ON
FIGHTING,
KENSIN.

...YOU
HAVE
ME!!

TWMP

Act 192
Battle on
Three Fronts:
Round 2,
Part 2

YOUR
SECOND
NOSEBLEED
OF THE
DAY!!

HOW'S
THAT!



...WITH
THE NEO-
INVULNER-
ABLE
GAUNTLETS
!!!

I'LL
SHOW YOU
WHO'S OUT
OF WHOSE
LEAGUE...



HE'S
BEYOND
ME...?
YOU'RE
ONE TO
TALK.

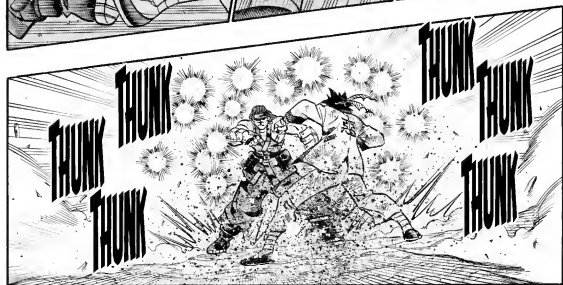
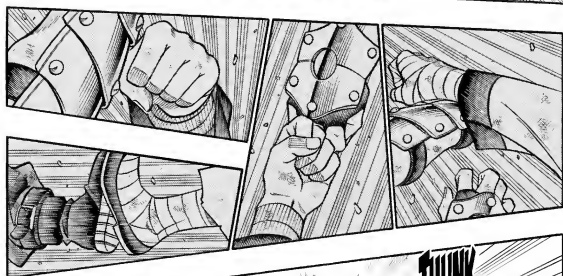


Act 192

**Battle
on
Three
Fronts:
Round 2,
Part 2**









YOU
DIDN'T
THINK YOUR
GAUNTLETS
WOULD WORK
FOREVER...?

KRORR

AFTER SEEING
IT SO MANY
TIMES...

BUT
MUTEKI-
RYŪ...

I SEE, EVEN
AN IDIOT
CAN LEARN.

WHAT!

...ISN'T
SO
SIMPLE
!!

無敵流

MUTEKI-RYŪ

轟斧爆

GŌFUBAKU (MIGHTY
AXE EXPLOSION)!

THWAP

GUH!!

SH
SH

SH
SHA



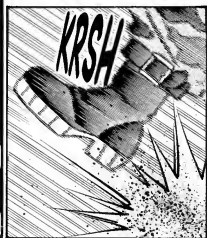
OFFENSE
IS THE BEST
DEFENSE!!

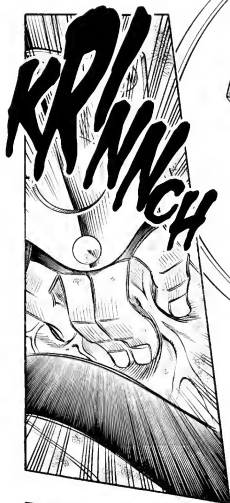
SHAK

I WON'T
GIVE YOU
THE CHANCE
TO STRIKE!



HERE
I GO!!







HERE...

NEXT
WE'LL
TEND
TO YOUR
WOUNDS—

SAA

YES,
WHILE
WE HAVE
TIME!

PLEASE...

THOUGH
THERE IS
A FRACTURE,
WE ARE
IN THE
MIDST OF
BATTLE.

NO
NEED.



SANO-
SUKE?!



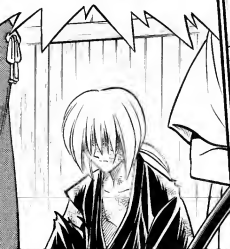
A THREE
PART
MOVE—
ASHURA SAI
(ASHURA
CRUSH)!

GRAB,
CRUSH...

...AND
THROW!

HA-HAA! THIS IS
MUTEKI-RYŪ, WHICH
BRINGS TOGETHER
THE BEST OF ALL
MARTIAL-ARTS IN
THE WORLD!
MY POWER!

CLASH





YOU ARE
IN THE MIDDLE
OF A FIGHT.
DON'T LET
YOUR GUARD
DOWN.

RRG! EVEN
NUMBSKULLS
HAVE A LIMIT!



SANO-
SUKE!



WAIT!



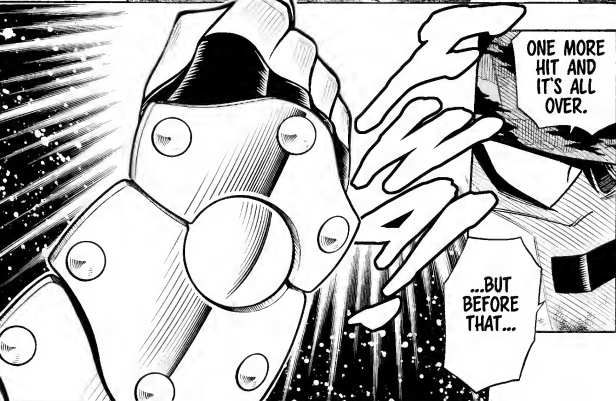


HE GOT THE
GOFUBAKU AND
ASHURA SAI,
WHICH GIVE
FOUR TYPES
OF WOUNDS...

...FROM
THE STRIKE,
STRANGLE,
CRUSH, AND
THROW. THERE
IS NO WAY HE
WOULD BE FINE!

HA-HAA!
NO
WONDER.

EVEN THE
NUMBEST OF
NUMBSKULLS IS
VULNERABLE
IN THE NECK!



ONE MORE
HIT AND
IT'S ALL
OVER.

...BUT
BEFORE
THAT...

I HAVE TO
REPAY YOU
FOR THAT,
OR ELSE I
WON'T HAVE
CLOSURE!!

YOU
DESTROYED
MY
PREVIOUS
GAUNTLETS
WITH SOME
ODD MOVE!!



LET'S TRY
IT AGAINST
THE NEO-
INVULNERABLE
GAUNTLETS!!



NOW
COME
AT ME!

...THAT'S
NOT
RIGHT.

WHAT
?



《 READ
THIS
WAY 》



YOU MUST
BE QUITE
CONCEITED TO
THINK YOU CAN
STOP THE
"MASTERY OF
TWO LAYERS"
WITH ONE
ARM!

**TAP
TAP**

YOU
SHOULD
BE DOING
THIS.



"MASTERED"
OR "MASTERY" IS
NOT SOMETHING
YOU CAN CLAIM
SO LIGHTLY...



I'LL GIVE YOU
SOME ADVICE
FROM MY
EXPERIENCE...

...OR
YOU'LL
SUFFER
MORE
THAN JUST
A LIGHT
BURN!!

YOU
SHOULD TONE
DOWN YOUR
STUPIDITY AND
CONCEIT...



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 193
Battle
on Three
Fronts:
Round 2,
Part 3

THE
"MASTERY
OF TWO
LAYERS."

NOW GET
READY!!

I'LL GIVE
IT TO
YOU JUST
LIKE YOU
WANT!

仲伸
月宏

GRIT

ENOUGH
...

IF I WANTED
TO, I COULD
FINISH YOU
IN ONE
MORE HIT!

WHY DON'T
YOU THINK
ABOUT THE
SITUATION
YOU'RE IN?!

CRUMBLE

CRUMBLE

NOT
ONLY ONE
GAUNTLET,
BUT TWO?

TWO,
YOU
SAY?!

...WITH
THE
JOKES!!

BLOO

OF

WHAT!
I'M
REALLY
GONNA
KILL
YOU!!

QUIT
COMPLAIN-
ING!

I'M GOING
ALONG WITH
WHAT YOU
WANT, SO SHUT
UP AND GET
READY!!!

神谷活心流

HEY!

BIRD
HEAD!!!

HEY
SANOSUKE!

ARE YOU
SERIOUS?

DO YOU
PLAN TO
USE THAT
MASTERY OF
WHATEVER?

SHUT UP!!

BE QUIET
FOR A
WHILE!!

WOMAN,
WE ARE
IN THE
MIDDLE...

IT'S
WRECKED!

YOU DO
KNOW WHAT
SHAPE YOUR
RIGHT HAND
IS IN,
RIGHT?

MEGUMI-
SAN...

BRAVE...

AHH!



YOU'RE
AT YOUR
LIMIT!!

IF
YOU DO
THAT
NOW,
THAT'S
IT!



UH?



HEAR
THAT?

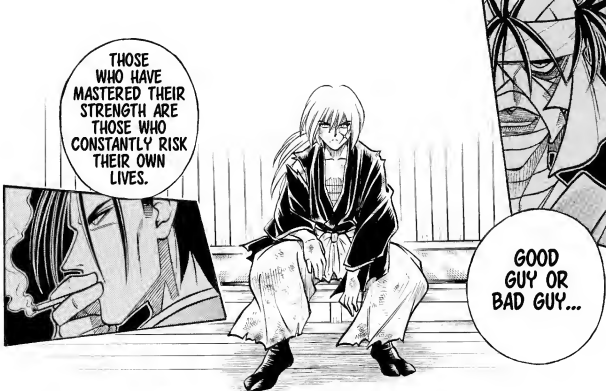


THIS
IS THE
LAST
BLOW!

HEH







THOSE
WHO HAVE
MASTERED THEIR
STRENGTH ARE
THOSE WHO
CONSTANTLY RISK
THEIR OWN
LIVES.

GOOD
GUY OR
BAD GUY...



...IN ORDER
TO PURSUE
HIS IDEALS...

THERE WAS
A MAN WHO
LOST HIS
LIFE...



...TURNING
HIMSELF INTO
A CRAZED
FUDO MYO-O,
CHALLENGING
THE WHOLE
WORLD...

ONE RISKED
HIS LIFE
IN ORDER
TO SAVE
THE WORLD...

YOU'VE NEVER
RISKED YOUR LIFE
FOR ANYTHING,
AND HAVE NEVER
FOUGHT ANYONE
STRONGER THAN
YOURSELF...

YOU PROBABLY
ONLY FIGHT THOSE
WHO ARE
WEAKER THAN
YOU...

WHAT?

GRIT



BUT BECAUSE
YOU HAD AN
EXCUSE, YOU
BARGED IN ON
SOMEONE ELSE'S
FIGHT...

...INTENDING
TO GET YOUR
FILTHY
ENJOYMENT...



...ANY
LONGER
!!

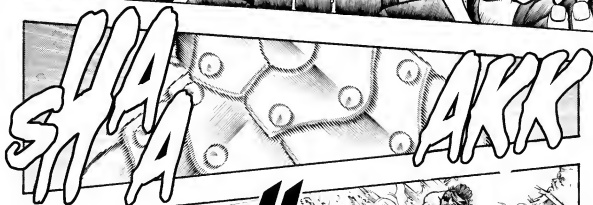
CLUNCH

I CAN'T
STAND THE
SOUND OF
A FAT TOAD
CROAKING IN
HIS LITTLE
POND...



PREPARE
FOR
TOTAL
ANNIHILA-
TION!!

I'LL
KILL
YOU!!



THEN I'LL YANK
YOUR HEAD
RIGHT OFF
YOUR NECK!!

ZAAA

ALL RIGHT,
STRIKE AT
ME. YOUR
RIGHT ARM
GOES FIRST!



IT'S A BIT
EARLY, BUT
I'M GIVING
IT BACK,
ANJI...

IT'S ALWAYS
BEEN A
BORROWED
SKILL...

ARE YOU
HAVING
DOUBTS
NOW?!

GRIP



THIS
IS
HOW...

CAMO-
FOOL.

...I'LL
SHOW
YOU.

TMP





...IS
MASTERED
!!!

...SOME-
THING...

KROOSH



IT'S A
DRAW?!

HIS
RIGHT HAND
AND THE
GAUNTLETS...



NO.



**G
A
H!**

ONE
RIGHT
FIST...

...VERSUS
TWO
GAUNTLETS
AND BOTH
ARMS.

THE "MASTERY
OF TWO LAYERS"
IS SOMETHING THAT
BRIGHT KING ANJI
DEVELOPED FOR
THE LIVES THAT
WERE LOST, AND
THAT SANOSUKE
RISKED HIS LIFE
TO ACQUIRE.

A
TRULY
DESTRUCTIVE
SKILL...





...MASTER
YOURSELF
IN THE
TRUE SENSE.
AND THEN
COME BACK.

BEFORE
YOU GET
CONCEITED
FROM
DEPENDING
ON YOUR
GAUNTLETS...

KRIK

BUT YOU
WILL NEVER
WIN AS LONG
AS YOU WEAR
THOSE
GAUNTLETS.

UGH...

...AND
CLAIMS
TO BE
UNDEFEATED,
NO
MATTER HOW
MANY TIMES
WE FIGHT.

I DON'T
THINK I'LL
LOSE TO A
GUY WHO
WEARS A
GAUNTLET
TO COVER
HIS
WEAKNESS...

WHAT!

HE
WILL
BE
FINE.

SANOSUKE'S...
RIGHT
HAND...

HE WON...
BUT...

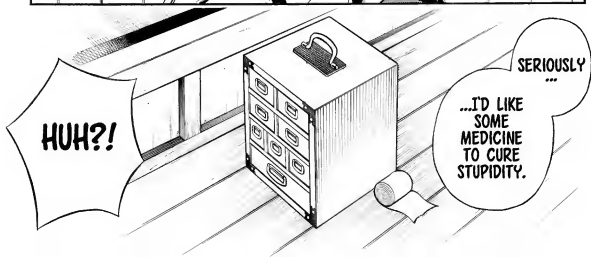
THE
LIMIT...

SANO AND
THIS ONE
HAVE BOTH
LEARNED
THAT IN OUR
PREVIOUS
BATTLE.

A LIMIT
IS THERE
TO BE
OVERCOME...

...IS NOT
SOMETHING
ONE CAN
DETERMINE
FOR
ONESELF...

WHAT
IS BEYOND
THAT,
WE CALL
MASTERY...



The Secret Life of Characters (44)

—Inui Banjin—

The personality—do I even have to say?—is Kazama Kagetsu from *Samurai Spirits*. Honestly speaking.

He was originally considered for one of the *Juppongatana*. He started as a "camouflage costume character," then was going to have army style hand-to-hand combat, but then I was asked, "Is there such a thing in this time period?" so he changed into a combined martial-arts user, and had the gauntlets added in order to add uniqueness. Finally, at the point where his personality was considered, we went with "a very lively idiot." Then with a little bit of tweaking, he became who he is.

The truth is, this character was influenced by the design more than the model. I have recently come to personally like these character types, so I like him quite a bit. The characters who think a lot, or are stoic, tend to be cool. But I would like to decrease the numbers in my next work, and make it full of these stupid types. (Of course, too many idiots would be a problem.)

The model in terms of design is also Kazama Kagetsu from *Samurai Spirits* (to be exact, the Kazama that shows up in the ending; things are different, like how the collar of his shirt opens). As mentioned above, a lot of different concepts went into him, making him look all weird. I am greatly regretting it. I also regret him being too much like Kagetsu. Simple is best. I must learn more about how to create characters that can be identified by silhouette. And this is the last time I will use *Samurai Spirits* as a model. I would like to ascend in design separately. (Of course, I will keep favoring the *Samurai Spirits* series. That's a different issue.)

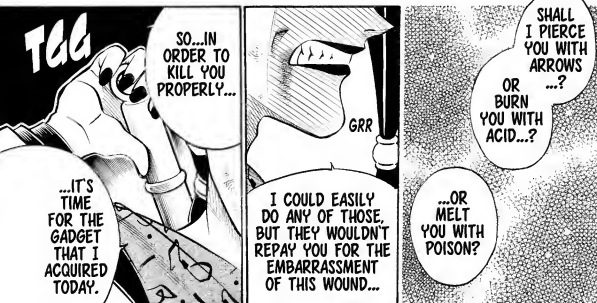




Act 194
Battle
on
Three
Fronts:
Round 3,
Part 1









SHADOW
INSTRUMENT
"BISHAMON'S
SWORD"!



ALL
RIGHT
!

WITH
ALL THE
STRENGTH
I HAVE...
I WILL
GO FULL
FORCE!!



...THIS IS THE
THIRD BATTLE
RISKING
MY LIFE...



TMP

HEH
HEH...
NOW
LET'S
START.



IT'S PRETTY
DULL FOR A
FAVORITE
WEAPON.

THE BLADE
ISN'T
SHARPENED
AT ALL!



HIS STEPS
HAVE NO
FORM.

HYA HA
HA HA!

LAUGH
WHILE YOU
CAN!

HE'S
SWINGING
RANDOMLY.



...HE'S A
TYPICAL NOVICE
SWORDSMAN!

NO MATTER
WHAT ANGLE
YOU LOOK
AT HIM
FROM...



I WILL
STRIKE...

...FIRST!!



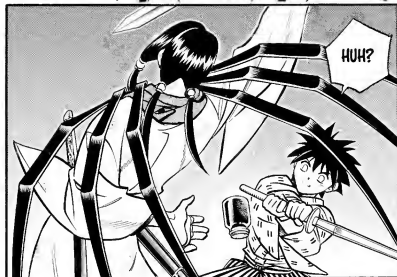
...BUT I AM
SUPERIOR IN
SWORDSMAN-
SHIP!!

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
KIND OF
SWORD
THAT
IS...

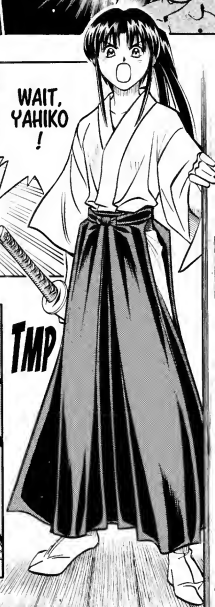


DO NOT
CARELESSLY
ATTACK
A SHADOW
INSTRUMENT
USER!!

WAIT,
YAHIKO
!



HUH?



TMP



HE'S
FAST!!

TOTALLY
DIFFERENT
FROM
BEFORE!

UGH.

ZOOOP

RUNNING
WON'T
SAVE
YOU!

SHHHH

HHHHH

!!

HERE
I
COME
!!



NO! SUCH AN ADVANCED
MOVE IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH
HIS NOVICE SKILLS...
WHICH MEANS THAT THIS
IS THE POWER OF THE
SHADOW INSTRUMENT—



HE CHANGED
DIRECTIONS
MID-SWING?!







...EN-
CHANTED
SWORD!

IT IS
AN...



GAH...



ZAA

ZAA

GETTING
SLASHED TO
DEATH BY
A NOVICE
SWORDS-
MAN...

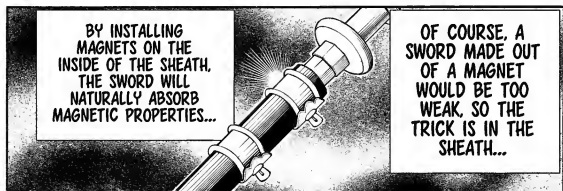
THERE IS
NO GREATER
EMBARRASS-
MENT
FOR YOU.
RIGHT?

HEH HEH...
HOW DO
YOU FEEL,
SWORD-
BOY?

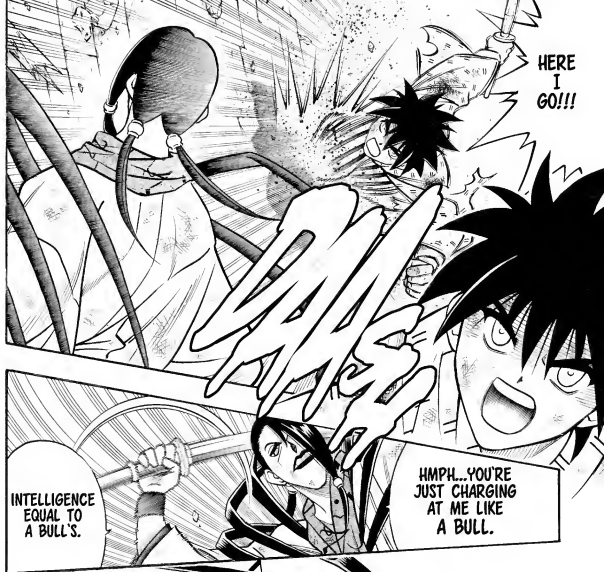
THERE IS NO SUCH
THING... IT'S DEFINITELY
A SHADOW INSTRUMENT.

THERE
MUST
BE A
TRICK...

A
TRICK—

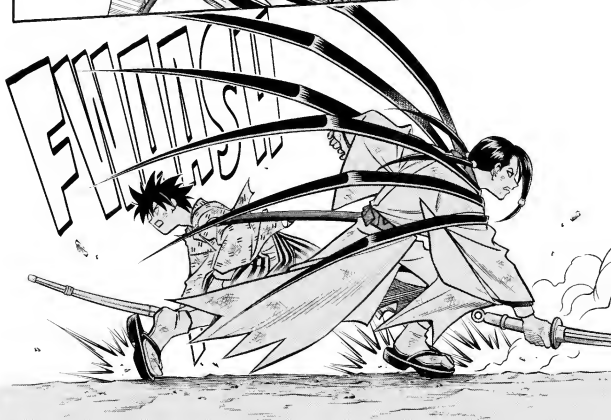






INTELLIGENCE
EQUAL TO
A BULL'S.

HMPH...YOU'RE
JUST CHARGING
AT ME LIKE
A BULL.



GUH!

SPORT

SHH

DON'T
TAKE OTOWA,
THE HUMAN
SHADOW
INSTRUMENT

...TOO
LIGHTLY!!



WHAT
?!

IF THE
TRICK TO
THE HIGH-
SPEED
AUTO-
TRACKING IS
MAGNETIC...

...THEN OF
COURSE THE
SWORD WOULD BE
ATTRACTED TO THE
MAGNETIC
SHEATH MORE
THAN THE IRON
POWDER!

HUFF

HUFF

...I
CAN'T
LOSE TO
YOU!

GUH...

GRAA

I SAID
I'D GO FULL
FORCE, AND
THOUGH I DIDN'T
WANT TO USE MY
THIEVING SKILLS,
IN ORDER TO LIVE
MY LIFE AS
A WARRIOR...

...TOO
LIGHTLY,
EITHER...

NOW!

ONCE THAT
HAPPENS,
OTOWA IS THE
WEAKEST OF
THE SIX...

NOW
HE'S TAKEN
AWAY HIS
OPPONENT'S
STRENGTH...

YOU
SHOULDN'T
TAKE OUR
YAHIKO...

JUST
KIDDING
!

MIYŌMIMANE
"HOMAGE
HIT"—
RYŪTSUISEN
"DRAGON
HAMMER
STRIKE"!!

FWOOON

NO!!

FWIP

FWIP

FINISH—

FWING

HERE
WE
GO!!

SHADOW INSTRUMENT

...RIKUDŌKO
(SIX
PASSAGE
BEAST)!





Rurouni Kenshin



Act 195—Battle on Three Fronts: Round 3, Part 2

SO
WHERE IT
IS HIDDEN IS
A HUGE
FACTOR...

A "SHADOW
INSTRUMENT"
IS A CONCEALED
WEAPON
DESIGNED FOR
ASSASSINA-
TIONS...

AT TIMES,
CALLING IT
AN ENCHANTED
SWORD MAKES IT
MYSTERIOUS!

AT TIMES,
DISGUISING
IT AS AN
UNUSUAL
ACCESSORY
MAKES IT
GAUDY!

BUT A
SUPERIOR
SHADOW
INSTRUMENT
USER KNOWS THAT
"HOW" IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN
"WHERE!"

...WITHIN HIS
OPPONENT'S
PSYCHOLOGY
!!

THE HUMAN
SHADOW
INSTRUMENT,
OTOWA,
CONCEALS
THE RELICS...

Act 195
Battle
on Three
Fronts:
Round 3,
Part 2





YA...
...HIKO
...



JUST...

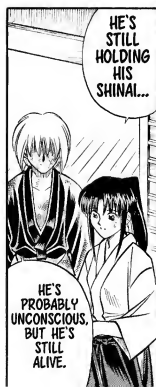
...KIDDING
!!



IT'S
OVER!

HOWEVER,
YOUR EFFORT,
WHICH MADE
ME USE MY
LAST RESORT, IS
COMMEND-
ABLE...

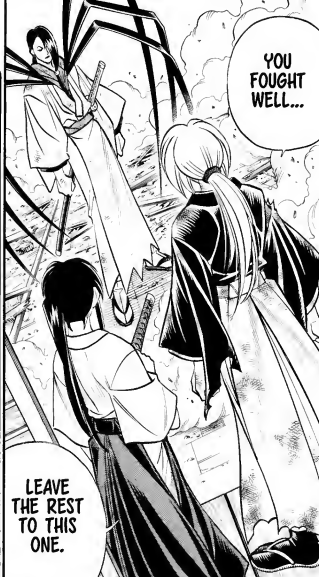
I WILL
NEVER
FORGET
YOUR
NAME,
KID.





WAIT
...

...UP
...



YOU
FOUGHT
WELL...

LEAVE
THE REST
TO THIS
ONE.

...LET
ME...
KEEP
FIGHTING.

PLEASE...

GAAAA

I...

...CAN...
STILL
FIGHT.

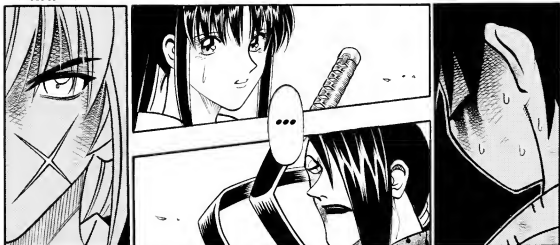


IF I
KEEP
GETTING
PROTECTED...

...I WON'T
GET ANY
STRONGER.







...YAHIKO.





IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE
!!

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING,
KENSIN?!



CAN'T YOU
SEE IT?! HIS
BODY...HE CAN
BARELY STAY
STANDING!

HE IS BARELY
HOLDING HIS
SHINAI, AND
HIS HEAD
IS TOTALLY
UNGUARDED!

I UNDERSTAND
YAHIKO'S FEELINGS,
BUT BATTLES TO
THE DEATH ARE
NOT SOMETHING
WON BY WILL-
POWER AND PEER
PRESSURE!



...KAORU-
DONO.

NO
WAY...



HIS
HEAD...



HIS HEAD...
UNGUARDED...



OH

THE
"GROWTH"
OF KIDS
HIS AGE...

HUFF

HUFF

EVEN
THE
RIKUDŌKO
DIDN'T
FINISH
YOU
OFF...

MY
ENTERTAIN-
MENT IS
RUINED...

AND THE
CHEESY
DIALOGUE...

...MAY BE
FASTER THAN
WHAT WE
ADULTS
THINK...



IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO GET HURT IN A FIGHT I JOINED TO ENJOY MYSELF.



...W-WELL, THIS IS PROBABLY THE TIME TO FLEE. BASED ON HIS FIGHT AGAINST GEIN, I WON'T BE ABLE TO BEAT HIM.



YOUR SKULL SPLIT BY A NOVICE.

IT WILL BE THE MOST DISGRACEFUL DEATH.



I'LL FINISH YOU WITH THIS.

HEH, YOUR MOUTH IS STILL MOVING ...

IT WOULD BE BEST TO FINISH HIM UP, AND IMMEDIATELY FLEE ...

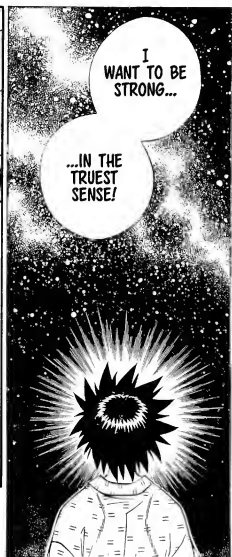
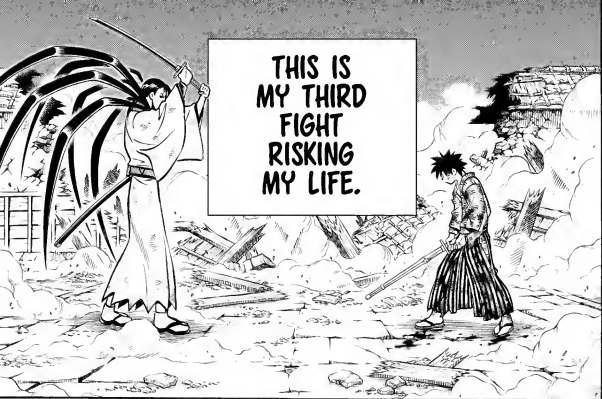


I AM YOUR OPPONENT!

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

HUFF

HUFF



...TO
HIS
BACK—

UNTIL
I
CATCH
UP...



I WILL
WIN!!

S H I I I ! !

RR
RR
RR
AA
AA

AND
KEEP
FIGHTING
!!

FLAS



KAMIYA

神谷

活心流

KASSHIN-
RYU!

奥義の
防り

DEFENSIVE FORM

刃止め

HADOME
(BLADE
HALTING)!



...SLIDE THE BACK
OF THE HANDS
ON THE BLADE
TO STRIKE WITH
THE HILT!

AND WHILE
HALTING THE
OPPONENT'S
BLADE...

YOU
FILTHY
BRAT!

THE OFFENSIVE FORM,
HAWATARI (BLADE
CROSSING)!!

奥義の攻め
刃渡り!!

SHAK

SHADOW
RELIC!





WE'LL
ALL
SEE YOU
AGAIN.

DON'T
WORRY.
NONE OF
US ARE
GOING
TO DIE.



AHH!

I
CAN'T
DIE!!



The Secret Life of Characters (45) —Otowa Hyōko—

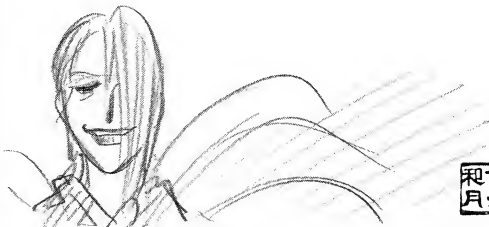
If Banjin's model is Kagetsu, is Otowa's model Kazama Sōgetsu from *Samurai Spirits*? No, this is not the case at all. Otowa has no model in terms of his personality. Just as a concept, because he was a shadow instrument user, I tried to make him a cruel character, sort of ending up like Kairyū.

There were many characters which were hard to hate in the *Juppongatana*, so I wanted to make the five appearing in these episodes as scum-like as possible, but it proved to be difficult. I created villains who had no ideals or beliefs, which made it difficult to portray them as an enjoyable read.

In terms of Otowa, I wanted to make him a more cunning and sadistic man, but due to my incompetence, he was not developed satisfactorily. I must improve on this aspect.

The model in terms of design was also not Kazama Sōgetsu, but an original character consisting of a drag queen-ish villain who wore a lot of lipstick, which was rejected at the preparation stage of the series. I've always wanted to remake him and use him, but had no opportunity to until now. And the six-pronged accessory on his collar was borrowed from Mr. Sinister in *X-Men "Age of Apocalypse."*

I personally feel that he is one of the better-designed characters, but what do you think?



和伸
月宏

Act 196
Smoke of
the Wolf

神谷活心流

奥義の攻め

KAMIYA KASSHIN-RYU
OFFENSIVE FORM...

「刃渡り」

HAWATARI!!

Act 196

Smoke of the Wolf



和伸
月宏



I...
DID
IT!



I'LL...
LOSE...

SHAKE
SHAKE

PLIP

PLIP

I HAVE TO
STAND UP...
IF I FALL
NOW...

I HAVEN'T
FINISHED
HIM YET...

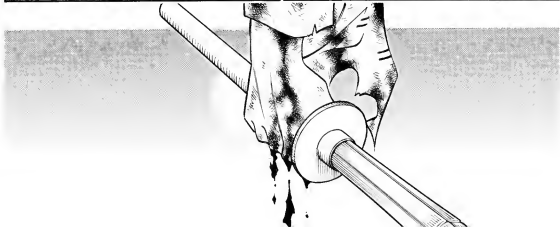
GAAH
...!

NO!!

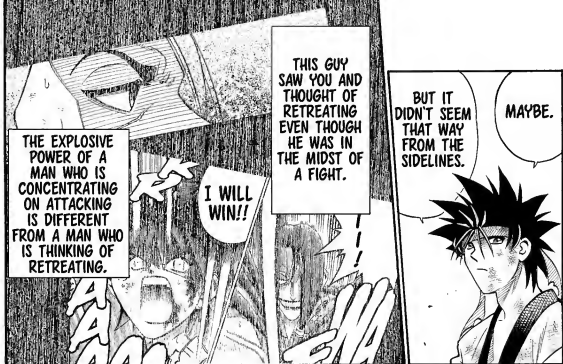
BOUGH!

WOBBLE

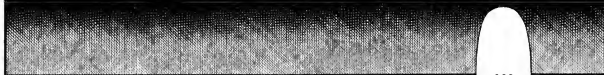
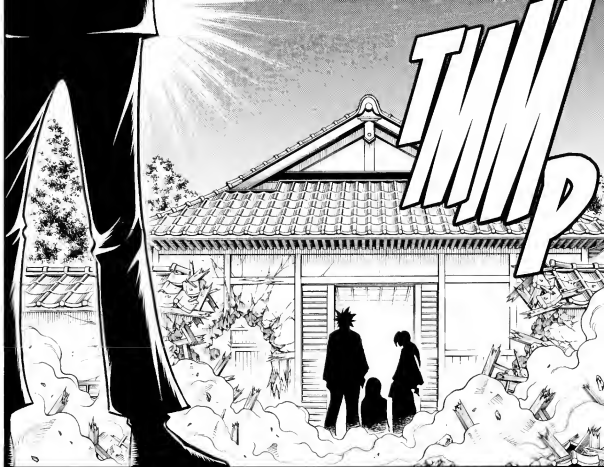
FMP



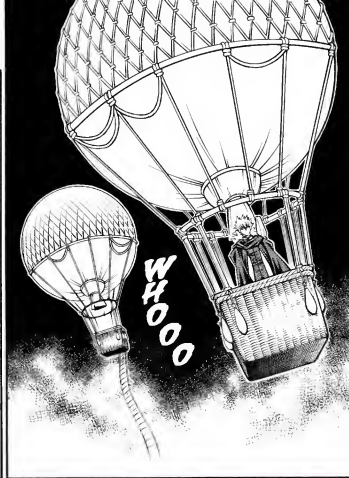
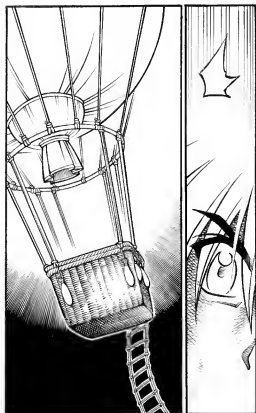


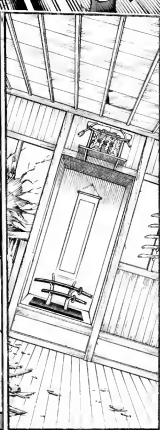
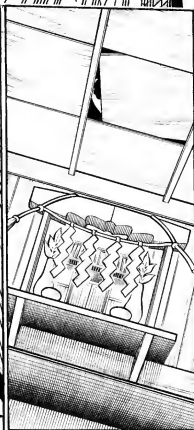










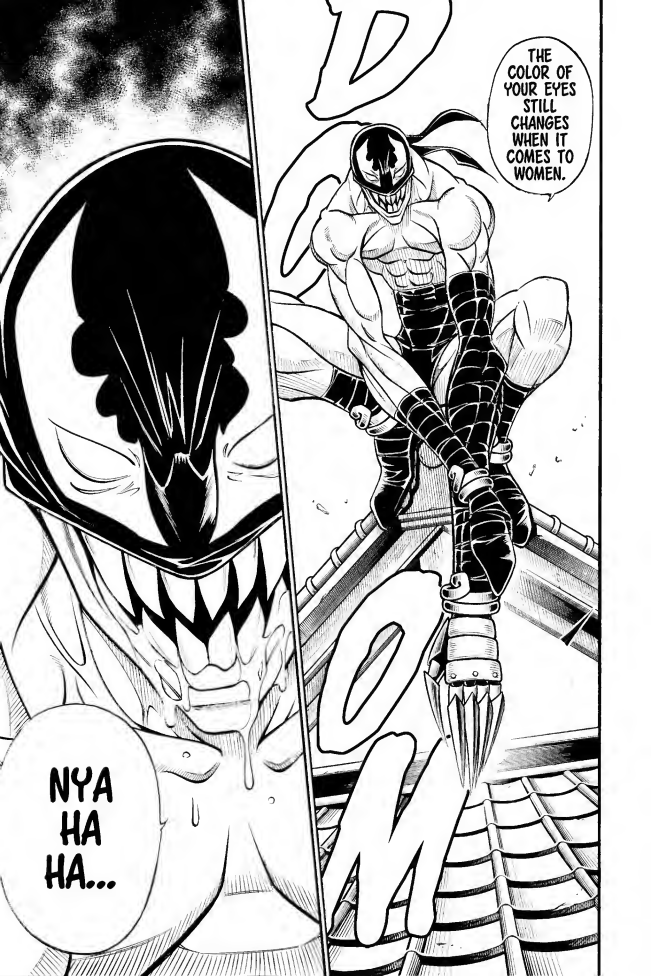






YOU
ARE...!





THE
COLOR OF
YOUR EYES
STILL
CHANGES
WHEN IT
COMES TO
WOMEN.

NYA
HA
HA...



...ARE
ALMOST
TWO TIMES
NORMAL
LENGTH.

THAT...
MAN'S ARMS
AND LEGS...



BUT THAT
LEFT ARM...IS
LONGER THAN
BEFORE...

YES...HE IS AN
ASSASSIN WHO CAN
ATTACK FROM
UNEXPECTED
LOCATIONS DUE
TO THOSE LIMBS...



YOU
LENGTH-
ENED
IT?

HEY,
DID YOU...
...THINK
THAT WE
WERE BORN
LIKE THIS?



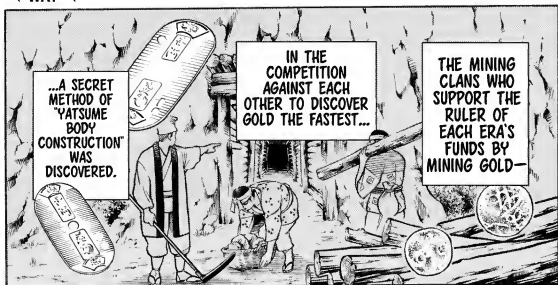
I
LENGTHENED
IT,
SPENDING
15 YEARS
TO DO
IT.



...FAMOUS
FOR ITS
EXPERTISE
IN GOLD
MINING.

THIS
BODY IS
THE SECRET
OF THE
YATSUME
CLAN...

I WAS 16
AT THE TIME,
TOWARDS THE
END OF MY
GROWTH SPURT,
SO I DID
HAVE TO BE
ROUGHER...



...A SECRET
METHOD OF
"YATSUME
BODY
CONSTRUCTION"
WAS DISCOVERED.

IN THE
COMPETITION
AGAINST EACH
OTHER TO DISCOVER
GOLD THE FASTEST...

THE MINING
CLANS WHO
SUPPORT THE
RULER OF
EACH ERA'S
FUNDS BY
MINING GOLD—

IT IS THE
SAME CONCEPT
AS THE
LONG-NECKED
TRIBES IN
AFRICA AND
FOOT BINDING
IN CHINA.

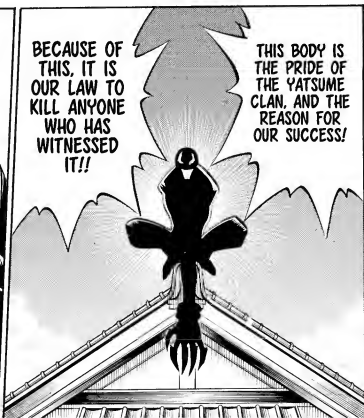
BY FITTING METAL
BANDS ON NEWBORNS, AND
INCREASING THE NUMBER
AS THE CHILD GROWS, WE
SHAPE OUR BODIES TO HAVE
LONG LIMBS SUITABLE FOR
CRAWLING IN THE MINES.

BATTŌSAI,
YOU'RE
FIRST!

BECAUSE OF
THIS, IT IS
OUR LAW TO
KILL ANYONE
WHO HAS
WITNESSED
IT!!

THIS BODY IS
THE PRIDE OF
THE YATSUME
CLAN, AND THE
REASON FOR
OUR SUCCESS!

THEN
EVERY-
ONE
HERE
WILL BE
MASSACRED
!!





THIS
BEAST
HOWLS
A LOT.

HMPH.



STARTING WITH
IKEDA-YA, I'VE
BEEN THROUGH
MANY DEADLY
BATTLES IN THE
BOSHIN AND
SEINAN WARS—

YOU DON'T
GIVE ME
MUCH
CREDIT.

Y...
YOU...

...WERE...
ALIVE?



I WAS
THE ONLY
ONE OF THE
SHINSENGUMI...

...SAID
TO BE
INVULNER-
ABLE.

To Be Continued In Vol. 23:
Sin, Judgment, Acceptance

"FREE TALK"

Long time no see, Watsuki here. I am feeling like I am being strangled by a scarf while endlessly playing "mole hunt." And every time, I tell myself, "No, no. I am very fortunate, so stop crying about it," which makes absolutely no sense, but I keep going. Be on the offensive! Positive thinking! When the going gets tough, it's time to evolve! Bravo! Viva Watsuki! Here we go! Yay!!

If I keep writing like that, people will think I'm crazy, so let's go to the next topic—the now traditional figure and game talk. The figure I wrote about as highly anticipated in my last segment, Cyber Violator of "Manga Spawn 2," is awesome. It makes me want to purchase the forbidden second figure because of its craftsmanship. Actually, I already did. What I have my eyes on now is the action doll base made by a certain garage kit maker. The bodyline is more beautiful than usual figures, and the range of motion has been greatly improved, so I would really like to incorporate it into our Nakoruru figure. Besides, the advancements in the action doll industry are just amazing. Although I don't plan on getting hooked, I can't keep my eyes off it.

In terms of games, I play *Virtual On Oratorio Taugram* once a week after work. I still suck, have a losing streak record in vs. mode, but I still am having fun. Right now, I mainly use Apharml Battler and Temujin, and sometimes use Grys-vok and Cypher. My current short-term goal is to be able to unleash Surfing Ram at will.

And of course, the Polygon *Samurai Spirits Volume 2—Samurai Spirits Asura Zannaden* came out. A *Samurai Spirits* in the summer was unexpected, but I am highly hoping for local stores to acquire this. I have my eyes on the additional revelations about the difference between Shura and Rasetsu. I must wait for now. (Off topic, but is 2D samurai totally phased out...? If that is the case, I am very disappointed.)

Changing topics, there was a Jump comics 30th year anniversary project called "Sugoi Jan!!!" It was in a survey format, asking for five manga you would recommend to others. I contemplated for a long time, and I ran out of time after thinking of three. There are many series I was hooked on, but why did I have to think so hard? Thinking about it afterwards, I realized that series "which did not end when it should have and kept rambling on" or "series that have chapter one end, or to be continued, with the author not showing a clear-cut ending" can be enjoyable as a reader, but as an author, I can't say I like it. Manga need a clear ending.

Anyhow, I wrote my feelings about *Rurouni Kenshin* in this "Sugoi Jan!!!" article, but was unable to fully express myself, so I would like to add to it here.

"It is a masterpiece of a lifetime which lets me realize my dreams to become a *mangaka*. However, whether this becomes a work I can be proud of will depend on the ending. I do not want to keep trailing on unnecessarily."

And that's it for now. See you next time.



Rurouni Kenshin



GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

*A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in **Rurouni Kenshin**. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because **Kenshin** is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of Kenshin’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”*

Edo

Capital city of the **Tokugawa Bakufu**; renamed **Tokyo** (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

Fudō Myō-ō

In Vajrayana Buddhism, the destroyer of delusion and protector of Buddhism. Also known in Sanskrit as “the Immovable One,” his immovability refers to his ability to remain “unmoved” by carnal temptations. His fearsome blue visage is typically surrounded by flames, representing the purification of the mind.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—**Kawakami Gensai**, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist **patriots** who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Ashura

Often depicted with three faces and six arms, in Japan, **Ashura** are considered to be guardian deities of Buddhism

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Bishamon

Often considered to be a god of war, **Bishamon** is usually depicted as wearing a halo-like wheel of flames

Boshin War

Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the **Tokugawa Bakufu**. The anti-**Bakufu**, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters.

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than **-san**; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Miyômime Ryûtsuisen

Yahiko's do-it-yourself version (*miyô*, to observe + *mimane*, to imitate what one has seen) of Kenshin's *Ryûtsuisen*. Kind of like a "monkey see, monkey do" thing, only...respectful, thus "Homage Hit."

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatô

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as **"-san"**).

shôgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Toba Fushimi, Battle at

Battle near **Kyoto** between the forces of the new, imperial government and the fallen **shôgunate**. Ending with an imperial victory, it was the first battle of the **Boshin War**.

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of **"Edo"** to **"Tokyo"** is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

jinchû

Hitokiri were fond of the word *tenchû*, or "judgment from the heavens," which expressed their belief that judgment lay in their hands. Enishi calls his form of revenge **jinchû**, meaning that if the heavens won't cast judgment on Kenshin, he will with his own brand of justice.

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of **Himura Kenshin**

karakuri

Intricately constructed mechanized dolls or automatons, **karakuri** were in many ways the predecessors of Japan's modern mechanical robots and devices

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the **Meiji Restoration** in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."